

American History Chapter 22: Postwar Confidence and Anxiety 1945 – 1960

U.S. History Objectives, North Carolina SCS

8.03: Assess the political, economic, social, and cultural effects of the war on the U.S. and other nations

11.02: Trace major events of the Civil Rights Movement and evaluate its impact.

11.03: Identify major social movement's including, but not limited to, those involving women, young people, and the environment, and evaluate the impact of these movements on U.S. society.

11.05: Examine the impact of technological innovations that have impacted American life.

After World War II many Americans were concerned that the economic hard times of the Great Depression would return. You will learn how the American economy transitions from producing tanks and fighter planes to new automobiles and consumer goods and experiences the longest period of economic growth in the nation's history. The government takes action to provide opportunities for the returning war veterans. A population explosion of new babies peaks in 1957 with a new American baby born every seven seconds!

New technology in manufacturing, new world wide markets create a demand for American made goods. Americans begin to move from the cities to the suburbs and the "car culture" impacts American society. President Eisenhower creates the Interstate Highway System and links the nation together with ribbons of concrete and asphalt roads.

A culture of consumerism develops Americans spend more as their income rises. A new demand for convenience goods and easy credit makes shopping a new pastime for many Americans. American experience a religious revival and television brings religious education into the front room of American homes. New types of entertainment, music, and television shows impact upon the American family.

Many Americans are concerned with this consumerism and emphasis on conformity. Rural and urban poverty is still very high and many minorities do not share in the boom times. Many intellectuals and artists are critical of American culture of the 1950's. Injustice and social inequality is found in American cities, Appalachian mine towns, and the rural southern states of the United States.

Section 1: An Economic Boom:

- Use web links or your textbook to define the following: G I Bill of Rights, demobilization, baby boom, productivity, Taft-Hartley Act.
- As you read section 1, create a list like the one shown on page 750 in your textbook. On this list show the problems raised by the shift to a peacetime economy and the steps taken to solve them
- Describe how the United States made the transformation to a peacetime economy

Section 2: A Society on the Move:

- Use web links or your textbook to define the following: Interstate Highway System, service sector, sunbelt, information industry, franchise business, California Master Plan
- Create a Chart like the one on page 756 to help you identify the main ideas found in section 2
- Describe the changes in the U.S. economy and education in the postwar period.

Section 3: Mass Culture and Family Life:

- Use web links or your textbook to define the following: consumerism, nuclear family, rock-and – roll, median family income
- To assist you in identifying the main ideas of section 3 create a and outline like the one shown on page 764 of your text.
- Describe the rise of new forms of mass culture

Section 4: Dissent and Discontent

- Use web links or your textbook to define the following: inner city, urban renewal, beatnik, termination policy
- Use the graphic organizer found on page 770 to record the main ideas and supporting details of section 4
- Summarize the arguments made by critics who rejected the culture of the fifties.